



News Release

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UDOH and Governor Huntsman Honor Utah's Lifesaving Emergency Medical Professionals

2005 National EMS Week: Ready, Responsive, Reliable

(Salt Lake City, UT) – “Don’t worry about me, save my brother,” John Dehaan called out to approaching rescuers as he struggled to keep his brother’s head above the icy cold waters of Utah Lake. John and his brother, Ted, were duck hunting when their small boat capsized on a cold afternoon in late November 2004.

When the Utah County Search and Rescue Team brought the brothers ashore, Ted wasn’t breathing and his heart wasn’t beating. The rescue team immediately began CPR, which they did for over 30 minutes until AIRMED Air Ambulance arrived at the scene. The AIRMED team continued CPR on Ted in flight despite the difficulty and risk of doing so in the air, but knowing it was Ted’s only chance for survival. They arrived at the University Medical Center Emergency Department with Ted showing no signs of life and a core temperature of 75.2 degrees Fahrenheit. He was immediately taken to the operating room, placed on cardiac bypass for warming, and after almost four hours of CPR, a pulse was finally detected. After having one of the lowest core body temperatures on record, Ted survived without any brain damage due to the aggressive and coordinated emergency care.

No one was willing to give up. Because of the selfless actions of Ted’s brother and the lifesaving medical efforts, Ted is alive and now home with his wife and children.

This is just one example of the lifesaving efforts that emergency medical services (EMS) professionals provide to those in need. In 2004, approximately 140,000 Utahns (7%) of the population of Utah has been touched by EMS care and expertise.

- MORE -

Page 2 of 2 - UDOH and Governor Huntsman Honor Utah's Lifesaving Emergency Medical Professionals

Today, Governor Jon Huntsman, Jr. recognized emergency medical professionals during the 2005 EMS Awards ceremony. Awards were presented in 13 categories to individuals and response teams who distinguished themselves through superior efforts in 2004.

“Whether career or volunteer, these men and women represent the many EMS professionals throughout the state that often risk their own safety to help others in need of emergency medical lifesaving care,” said Governor Jon Huntsman, Jr. “They will sacrifice to respond and provide rapid, reliable care to those most in need 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.”

“EMS providers are now expected to become knowledgeable not only in the care of common trauma and medical illness, but must also be prepared to deal with hazardous materials, bioterrorism incidents, mass casualty incidents and weapons of mass destruction,” said Dr. David N. Sundwall, Executive Director, UDOH. “It is an enormous responsibility that professional and volunteer members of the EMS system carry to protect and care for us at a moments notice.”

The annual EMS Awards ceremony begins National EMS Week, May 15-21, 2005. The 2005 National EMS Week's theme is -- EMS: Ready, Responsive, Reliable.

“The national theme reflects the commitment and dedication of EMS professionals,” said Jan Buttrey, Director, Bureau of Emergency Medical Services, UDOH. “EMS professionals are always **ready** because they are available anywhere and any time. They are **reliable** in **responding** to all kinds of medical emergencies.”

Please see the attached list of 2005 award winners. The EMS Week Awards are presented by the UDOH's Bureau of Emergency Medical Services in cooperation with the Sandy City Fire Department.

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The mission of the Utah Department of Health is to protect the public's health through preventing avoidable illness, injury, disability and premature death, assuring access to affordable, quality health care, and promoting healthy lifestyles.